

The vocabulary of Martianus Capella commentators

Some observations

The oldest commentary traditions on Martianus Capella are not a rich source for neologisms in the strict sense of the word. Newly formed words, arisen from contact with, for example, vernacular languages, are hardly used in these texts. And yet, they are highly interesting sources when one is interested in lexicography. They are full of Latinized forms of Greek terminology, and of old words with new meanings, particular in the area of the technical vocabulary of the seven liberal arts. They have, as will be illustrated in this paper, new forms caused by a faulty transmission of the text. What do we consider these? Are they new words? Are they plain errors? They are, in most cases, edited as errors, or rather dismissed as errors and emended out of existence in scholarly editions, which, consequently, makes it hard to trace them.

The focus of this paper will be on this kind of vocabulary; not so much the phenomenon of the new formation of words, but rather the sheer interest in vocabulary, and especially the technical vocabulary to which the ninth-century commentaries on Martianus Capella testify.

The manuscript tradition of Martianus Capella and the oldest commentary

Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* was immensely popular in the ninth century. There are today close to fifty manuscripts of the text from the Carolingian period, and many of these are densely annotated in ninth-century hands¹. The earliest history of the text is uncertain. Martianus

¹ See, on the manuscripts of Martianus Capella, C. LEONARDI, "I codici di Marziano Capella I-II", *Aevum* 33 (1959), p. 443-489, and *Aevum* 34 (1960), p. 1-99 and 411-524; J. PRÉAUX, "Les manuscrits principaux du 'De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii' de Martianus Capella", *Lettres latines du moyen âge et de la renaissance*, Bruxelles, 1978 (Collection Latomus 158), p. 76-128; C. LUTZ, "Martianus Capella", in *Catalogus translationum et commentatorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries. Annotated Lists and Guides*, Vol. II, ed. P.O. KRISTELLER – F.E. KRANZ (et al.), Washington DC, 1971, p. 367-381 ("Addenda et corrigenda" in Vol. III, 1976, p. 449-452, and in Vol. VI, 1986, p. 185-186); M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the*

himself has been dated to the period 410–439 C.E., but both significantly earlier and later datings have been suggested². The first secure datable piece of evidence that provides us with a *terminus ante quem* is a subscription added to the text of Securus Melior Felix, a Roman rhetorician who claims to have corrected the text from corrupted exemplars, which can be dated with confidence to 534 C.E.³ From the sixth to eighth centuries there is hardly any evidence of the survival of the text, and it resurfaces only in the Carolingian period, just as so many other ancient and late-antique texts as well. The oldest sources, a fragment preserved today in Karlsruhe (*Karlsruhe, BL, Reich.Fragm. 136*) and a miscellaneous manuscript today in Würzburg (*Würzburg, UB, M.p.misc.f. 5a*), are dated to the late eighth and early ninth century⁴. Both contain sections from the third book of *De nuptiis, On Grammar*. The first complete manuscripts date from the 830's or 840's. These are already densely annotated, and, more importantly perhaps, laid out to contain annotations. They have, for instance, separate gloss columns next to the text space, pricked and ruled in dry point, or extra wide linear spacing to accomodate interlinear glosses. This seems to suggest that text and glosses were brought into circulation together, right from the start of their dissemination⁵.

The oldest commentary – previously attributed first to the Irish scholar Dunchad (first half of the ninth century?), later to another Irish scholar Martin of Laon (819–875), and presently anonymous – is copied in sixteen manuscripts⁶. For our knowledge of the commentary tradition, the degree to which we can use these sources varies strongly. For even when the text and the glosses were considered two parts of one text, the status and authority of the two components were valued very differently. The text itself was (by and large) copied conscientiously and completely, but in the copying of the glosses the

Music of the Spheres. The ars musica in ninth-century commentaries on Martianus Capella, Leiden, etc., 2002 (Mittelaltinische Studien und Texte 30), esp. p. 60–150.

² W.H. STAHL – R. JOHNSON, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, Vol. I, New York, 1971 (repr. 1977), p. 12–15; D. SHANZER, *A Philosophical and Literary Commentary on Martianus Capella's De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii Book I*, Berkeley, etc., 1986 (Classical Studies 32), p. 5–17; S. GREBE, *Martianus Capella "De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii". Darstellung der Sieben Freien Künste und ihrer Beziehungen zueinander*, Stuttgart, Leipzig, 1999 (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 119), p. 16–21; M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 15–20.

³ The full subscription reads: "Securus Melior Felix, vir spectabilis, comes consistorianus, rhetor Urbis Romae, ex mendosissimis exemplaribus emendabam contra legente Deuterio, scolastico, discipulo meo, Romae, ad portam Capenam consulatu Paulini, viri clarissimi, sub V nonarum Martiarum, Christo adiuvante." See J. PRÉAUX, "Securus Melior Felix, l'ultime Orator Urbis Romae", in *Corona gratiarum E. Dekkers*, Brugge, Den Haag, 1974, p. 101–121; A. CAMERON, "Martianus and his first editor", *Classical Philology* 81 (1986), p. 320–328.

⁴ C. LEONARDI, "I codici", II, n^{os}. 57 (p. 57) and 240 (p. 495–496) respectively; M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 26–27.

⁵ M. TEEUWEN, "The study of Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis* in the ninth century", in: *Learned Antiquity. Scholarship and Society in the Near-East, the Greco-Roman world, and the Early Medieval West*, eds. A.A. MACDONALD – M.W. TWOMEY – G.J. REININK, Leuven, etc., 2003, p. 185–194.

⁶ J. PRÉAUX, "Le commentaire de Martin de Laon sur l'œuvre de Martianus Capella", *Latomus* 12 (1953), p. 437–459; C. LUTZ, "Martianus Capella", *CTC* II, p. 370; M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 33–36.

copyists seem to have had much more freedom to choose and select, to alterate, correct, or add. Nevertheless, there is enough common material to establish a “fixed” text of the oldest commentary, even when its outlines are definitely and considerably more blurred than in traditional texts.

In some of the manuscripts only some glosses from the Anonymous commentary are transmitted, and these are mixed with later layers of glosses, such as those attributed to John the Scot Eriugene (ca. 810-877) or Remigius of Auxerre (ca. 841-ca. 908). Or, in some manuscripts only the introductory books of Martianus Capella’s encyclopedia are glossed, or only one or two of the books on the arts. Jean Préaux arranged the *De nuptiis* manuscripts in a “hierarchy of closeness” to the original, ordering them into concentric circles around the late-antique original in *scriptio continua*⁷. Even though the schemata of the relations between the text-sources and the Anonymous-commentary-sources would show some differences, by and large they are in accordance, and a similar idea of hierarchy in closeness to the original can be adopted for the commentary-sources. There are four “most important” manuscripts which contain a more or less “pure” version of the complete Anonymous commentary. These are *Leiden, University Library, Vossianus Latinus Folio 48*; *Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 594*; *Leiden, University Library, BPL 88*; and *Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg.lat. 1987*. They are dated in the second or third quarter of the ninth century, and were written in the central part of the Carolingian empire: they are, to varying degrees of certainty, placed in Auxerre, Corbie, and Reims. Each of the four “most important” manuscripts have writing errors and errors in lay-out, which prove that none of them contains an original text. Four other manuscripts have less complete or more mixed versions of the oldest commentary, but are still useful sources. These are *Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud.lat. 118*; *Leiden, University Library, BPL 87*; *Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 8671*; and *Leiden, University Library, BPL 36*. The eight remaining sources are of minor importance⁸.

Vocabulary and technical terminology in the oldest commentary

The ninth-century scholar (or perhaps scholars) who first studied and annotated Martianus Capella’s text shows a vivid interest in the vocabulary of the work. Definitions were very much en vogue, studiously collected and repeated. When Martianus Capella himself defines a technical term, his definition was often repeated in the glosses when the technical term in question popped up later in the text. For example: Martianus’ own definition of a “tone”, given in book 9 “On harmony”, *tonus est spatium cum legitima quantitate*, “a tone is a

⁷ J. PRÉAUX, “Les manuscrits principaux”.

⁸ These are: *Firenze, BML, San Marco 190*; *Napoli, BN, IV.G.68*; *Orléans, BM, 191*; *Paris, BnF, lat. 8670*; *Paris, BnF, lat. 12960*; *St. Petersburg, NL, Class.lat. F.V.10*; *Vaticano, BAV, Reg.lat. 1535*; *Vaticano, BAV, Vat. lat. 8501*.

distance with a legitimate quantity”⁹, is cited several times in all commentaries on Martianus Capella. It occurs in the oldest commentary in glosses added to book I, when the mysterious grove of Apollo is described in which the trees themselves bring forth music, or also in book II, where Philology is told to travel from planet to planet and the distance between the planets is measured in tones¹⁰. But it also occurs in the *Glossa maior* collection added to Boethius’ *De institutione musica*¹¹, and in two ninth-century music theoretical treatises who belong to the very first witnesses of musical thinking and theorizing in the Middle Ages: *Musica enchiriadis* and *Scholica enchiriadis*¹².

A second example of the way in which Martianus’ text was used to harvest definitions is found in the annotations surrounding the technical term *chromaticus*. This kind of melodic movement, characterised by a progression in semitones, is defined by Martianus himself by an analogy¹³:

[956] sicut enim quod inter album nigrumque est color dicitur, ita hoc chroma, quod inter utrumque <enharmonia et diatonon> est nominatur.

For just as that which is in between white and black is called colour, so that which is in between <enharmonic et diatonic> is called “chroma”.

A similar explanation is found in Isidore’s *Etymologies*¹⁴; the full explanation is found in the *glossa maior* on Boethius’ *De institutione musica*¹⁵, in the Anonymous commentary on Martianus (357.7-8)¹⁶, several times in the commentary of Remigius of Auxerre, and allusions to it are also found in later music theoretical treatises.

Sometimes, however, Martianus introduces technical vocabulary without explanation, and the later students of the text are seen racking their brains over its meaning. One example is the half-Greek word *idicon*, a corruption of the

⁹ Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, ed. J. WILLIS, Leipzig, 1983, p. 356-357.

¹⁰ For example, ad 7.2-4: ... *Tonus vero est spatium cum legitima qualitate, emitonium semis tonus*. M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 365-366.

¹¹ *Glossa maior in institutionem musicam Boethii*, Vol. I, eds. M. BERNHARD – C.M. BOWER, München, 1993 (Bayerische Akademie für Wissenschaften, Veröffentlichungen der Musikhistorischen Kommission 9), [p. 167, 195,6] *Felix Capella*: “*Tonus est spatium cum legitima quantitate, qui diversis inter se sonis conficitur*.”; and [p. 233, 202,26] *Est enim sesquiocitava proportio tonus, i. legitima spatium inter chordam et chordam*.

¹² *Musica et scholica enchiriadis una cum aliquibus tractatulis adiunctis*, ed. H. SCHMID, München, 1981 (Bayerische Akademie für Wissenschaften, Veröffentlichungen der Musikhistorischen Kommission 3), p. 21 (*Musica enchiriadis*): *Tonus est spacii legitima magnitudo a sono in sonum*. Or p. 65 (*Scholica enchiriadis*): *D<iscipulus>: Tonus quid est? M<agister>: Legitimum acuminis vel gravitatis spacium inter sonum ac sonum veluti inter cordam et cordam*.

¹³ Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis*, p. 368.

¹⁴ Isidore, *Etymologiae sive originum libri XX*, ed. W.M. LINDSAY, Oxford, 1957², 10,45: *Chromaticus, quia non confunditur nec colorem mutat. Graece enim χρωμα color vocatur*.

¹⁵ *Glossa maior*, I, p. 224: [I,15,16a] *Chroma et chromaticum unum est, i. colorabile, quia ab utrisque accipit colorem*.

¹⁶ Ad 357.7-8: *Cromaticon gen<u>s dicitur colorabile. Croma enim Grece Latine color dicitur. Sicut enim color dicitur, quicquid est medium inter album et nigrum, sic cromaticum modulandi gen<u>s in medio inter enarmonion et diatonon positum est*. M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 491.

Greek word ὑλικόν (*hylikon*), “musical matter”. Martianus uses it in section 936, where he explains that “harmony” in general can be classified into three categories: *hylikon*, *apergastikon* and *exangeltikon*, also called *hermeneutikon*. These categories concern the degree to which musical matter is ordered or formed: *hylikon* is unformed musical matter, “sound”; *apergastikon* and *exangeltikon* are musical matter proportioned in their melodical and rhythmical aspects – “music” or “chant”. This is all very briefly and not very clearly mentioned by Martianus, and the ninth-century commentator added a long gloss to explain it¹⁷:

[360.8] ΥΔΙΚΟΝ

¹Primum genus est idicon, quo genere forme inveniuntur.

²Formarum autem tres sunt species, quarum prima in sonis, secunda in numeris, tertia in verbis.

³Illa autem prima i. quae in sonis invenitur, ad armoniam pertinet.

⁴Non etenim in ea verba aliquid significantia, sed soni tantum sibimet ipsis aliqua ratione coniuncti queruntur, ut sunt sequentiae apud cantores.

⁵Secunda autem quae ad numeros pertinet nihil aliud requirit nisi tantum convenientem numerum sonorum, nichil significantium [aut nichil] aut aliquid significantium absque ullo certo termino, ut est scansio versuum.

⁶Tertia vero, quae ad verba pertinet et vocatur metrica, non solum sonos certis temporibus terminatos inquirat, sed etiam cogit, ut aliquid significant et certum numerum terminumque non excedant.

⁷Quorum exempla sunt versus et metrum, in quibus duobus certus terminus numerusque pedum ponitur, <in> versu[i] quidem in senario, in metro vero in octonario.

⁸Sed notandum, quod hae tres formae in humanis vocibus inveniri possunt.

⁹In armonia vero, i. in his vocibus quae carent sensu, non est nisi una i. prima.

¹⁰In ea enim sonus tantum invenitur et non sine ratione numerorum.

¹¹In hac vero i. humana voce aliquando sonus sine sensu, non tamen sine numero invenitur, si aliqua proportionem copuletur; aliquando sonus cum sensu et numero, quae verborum nomine meruit appellari.

ΥΔΙΚΟΝ

¹The first aspect is *idicon*, in which aspect (the different kinds of) forms are found.

²There are, however, three kinds of forms, of which the first is found in sounds, the second in numbers, the third in words.

³The first, that is the one found in sounds, pertains to *harmonia*.

⁴For in this (form) one seeks not words with a certain meaning, but only sounds, which are joined with each other according to some rational basis, just as sequences are among singers¹⁸.

¹⁷ Ad 360.8, M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 326-329, 499-500.

¹⁸ This, by the way, is a very early reference to the genre “sequentia”. It illustrates that, in this context at least, “sequentia” was used for a melody without words. On this, see M. TEEUWEN, “*Ut sunt sequentiae apud cantores*. Muziekpraktijk in een negende-eeuws commentaar op Martianus Capella”, *Madoc* 15 (2001), p. 130-138.

⁵The second (form), which pertains to numbers, seeks nothing but a fitting rhythm of sounds ; without meaning, or with some kind of meaning without a certain measure, just as in the scanning of verses.

⁶The third (form) then, which pertains to words and is called *metrica*, seeks not only sounds measured in certain time units, but also compels that they mean something and that they do not exceed a certain rhythm or a certain measure.

⁷Examples of this (third form) are verse and metre, in both of which a certain measure and number of feet are posited ; in verse in six (a *hexameter*, for example ?), in metre in eight (an *octameter* ?).

⁸Let it be noted, however, that these three forms can be found in human utterances.

⁹In harmony, that is in those utterances that do not bear meaning, just one can be found, that is the first (form).

¹⁰In this, (that is harmony) only sound is found, though not without the logic of numbers.

¹¹In this, (that is in human utterance) sometimes sound is found without meaning, not, however, without number, if it is joined together according to some (rhythmic) proportion ; sometimes sound (is found) with meaning and number, which deserves to be named “words”.

In the individual manuscripts, the word *hylikon* appears as *idicon* (YΔIKON), but also YΔIKON, or YAICON. In the modern editions of the text, the Greek word *hylikon* is used, spelled either in Greek or in Latin letters, with a “y” or a “u”, or, in one edition of the commentary of Remigius of Auxerre on Martianus Capella, even further transformed into “heidikon”. This “new word” has many appearances, which makes it difficult to trace through dictionaries or word-searches. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* gives the adjective *hylicus* (a transliteration from the Greek *hylicos*), and notes that it occurs in the works of just a few authors: Ps. Apuleius, Servius, Irenaeus, Marius Victorinus and Martianus Capella. The noun *hyle*, meaning “materia”, or “substantia”, from which *hylicus* is derived, is only slightly more common in the Latin sources or late Antiquity. In the medieval Latin dictionaries, the word is not mentioned in any other, or later sources.

The transformation of *hylikon* to *idicon*, moreover, did not remain without consequence. Both in the anonymous commentary and in the commentary of Remigius of Auxerre, a new etymology is attached to the word, in which it is linked to *eidōs* (form) and not to *hyle* (matter) :

*Anonymous commentary*¹⁹ :

[360.7] YΔIKON

i. formabile

Yda forma. YΔIKON formabile. Prius enim formatur vox, deinde opus cantilenae, inde interpretatio i. iudicium

¹⁹ M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 499.

*Remigius of Auxerre*²⁰:

[499.9] ΕΙΔΙΚΟΝ id est formale, ΕΙΔΟC forma vel species

This leads us to an important point, for even though editors are meant to interfere with their text – to expose corruptions in order to make the text understandable –, at the same time they must proceed very cautiously, especially when at one point in its history the text formed the basis of another. Commentaries on corrupt passages can only be understood when the corrupt passage is still, in some form, available.

Still, this particular “neologism” only occurs in a few medieval texts: the oldest commentary on Martianus Capella, and the commentary of Remigius of Auxerre, which dates from around 900. The word has so far not been found in any text unrelated to Martianus Capella, and it is definitely not a term which came to play a role in the technical vocabulary of the theory of music in the centuries to follow.

There is more corrupted Greek in Martianus Capella, which potentially led to the formation of new words: ἀείζων (II.43.24), for example, was transcribed as ΛΕΙΖΩC; ῥομβοειδής (a word from the technical vocabulary of Geometry) became POMBOIACH, PONBOCTANC, PONBOIAHC; the earlier mentioned term ἐξαγγελτικόν became EZANTEATIKON (or worse). Whether these corrupted forms came to lead a new life is an area that remains to be further explored.

New meanings for old words

A second example from the oldest commentary tradition illustrates a different lexicographical phenomenon: words which are not new, but which developed a new, technical meaning. My example concerns the term *paginula*, a not uncommon word, which occurs in Martianus’ second book, that is, in some versions of the text.

In the narrative of Martianus’ encyclopedia (sections 136-139) Philology will have to undertake a heavenly journey from the earth up to the highest sphere, in order to literally break her free from her earthbound existence and with this transform her into a suitable bride for the god Mercury. When she wants to embark upon this journey, however, she finds herself too heavy to lift herself from the earth. She then literally emits all her earthly knowledge: streams of books, papyri, single leaves, written upon in all kinds of letters and signs, formulae, tables or pictures flow from her mouth, until her inflated belly is empty and light. In this passage, the word *pagina* occurs²¹:

²⁰ Remigius of Auxerre, *Commentum in Martianum Capellam*, Vol. II: Libri III-IX, ed. C.E. LUTZ, Leiden 1965, p. 335

²¹ Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis*, p. 43

Martianus Capella, section 138:

in aliis [voluminibus] quippe distinctae ad tonum ac deductae paginae, in aliis circuli lineaeque hemisphaeriaque cum trigonis et quadratis multiangulaeque formae pro theorematum vel elementorum diversitate formatae; dehinc pictura animalium membra multigenum in unam speciem complicabat.

(Transl. W. H. Stahl²².)

In some of these books the pages were marked with musical notation and were very long; in others there were circles and straight lines and hemispheres, together with triangles and squares and polygonal shapes drawn to suit the different theorems and elements; then a representation joined together the limbs of various animals into a particular species.

The phrase *distinctae ad tonum ac deductae paginae* poses a puzzle. We would perhaps think of, as Stahl in his translation probably did, scrolls with musical notation. *Exultet* scrolls, for example, for which several leaves of parchment were attached to one another. But these scrolls are of a much later date. Music notation in general, in the form known as neume-notation, is a phenomenon that only started in the ninth century, and was only fully employed in liturgical books from, roughly, the tenth century²³. For the average ninth-century student of the text, the phrase may, therefore, have a meaning which is very different from Stahl's translation. A *pagina distincta ad tonum* was definitely not by association interpreted as a page prepared to be filled with neume notation.

John the Scot, who also wrote a commentary on *De nuptiis*, had a source at his disposal with, apparently, a different reading. Instead of the word *paginae* he has *paginulae*, a word which guided him to Boethius' *De institutione musica*, where this word is used in a specific, technical meaning. In his *De institutione musica* Boethius includes large schemata with an ancient form of pitch notation. He uses letters and modified letter-like signs to indicate pitches, and places these in tables to show the relationships between the ancient modes in the Greek modal system. It goes too far to explain the complexities of the system here, but what matters to us here is that Boethius used tables consisting of rows and columns, which resulted in a structured collection of boxes, with signs representing pitches in them. For these boxes he used the term *paginula*.

In his commentary on *De nuptiis*, John the Scot commented upon the passage "*distinctae ad tonum ac deductae paginulae*" in such a way, that it certainly relates to Boethius' specific, technical use of the term. He had, in other words, Boethius' terminology in the back of his mind when explaining the phrase from Martianus Capella, and gave Martianus Capella's words a new, different meaning:

[60,8] PAGINULAE dicuntur in musica ubi tropi in altitudinem ascendunt pro differentiationem (sic) tonorum.

²² W.H. STAHL, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, Vol. II, p. 47.

²³ For a short introduction into this matter, see D. HILEY, *Western Plainchant. A Handbook*, Oxford, 1995², p. 361-373.

PAGINULAE are called in music the place (*i.e.* on the page, or rather: *in the table*) where the modes rise for the differentiation of the pitches²⁴.

Not only John the Scot, but also the oldest Anonymous commentary frequently relies upon Boethius' *De institutione musica* when explaining technical content or vocabulary of the *ars musica*²⁵. There are several direct parallels with the first book of Boethius' five books, and indirect links with at least the second to fourth books. Struggling with the abstract concepts of Greek musical theory, such as *tonus*, *sonus*, *diastema*, *sistema*, *consonantia*, *dissonantia*, *symphonia* etc., the author of the anonymous commentary frequently referred to Boethius' usually clearer explanations. Also, when the author came across vocabulary that was not used or explained by Boethius, he occasionally noted this fact, or supplied the "Boethian" term in his annotation. There are also examples of the use of Martianus by the commentators of the *glossa maior* on Boethius²⁶. In fact, the two gloss collections show so many similarities, in the use of the same sources antique knowledge, in choice of words and vocabulary, that we must conclude that they were composed in very similar intellectual contexts. It would be too bold to conclude that they were from the same author, the same place or the same date, but their origins cannot have been too far apart from each other. More comparative work is needed here to become conclusive.

The struggle with vocabulary and technical terms was continued by the first medieval authors of music-theoretical treatises, who sought to incorporate the ancient vocabulary into the description of their own music practice – the first systematic reflections on chant practice. Some of the definitions phrased by the Anonymous commentator found their way into the *Glossa maior* on Boethius' *De institutione musica*, into the later commentaries on *De nuptiis* and into later treatises on music theory or chant practice.

Lexicographical interest in the tenth century : the case of Rather of Verona (890-974)

In a final example the lexicographical interest Martianus incited in a tenth-century scholar is illustrated. In *Leiden, UB, Vossianus Latinus Folio 48*, several later annotations are added to the text by Rather of Verona. Rather was an

²⁴ John the Scot, *Annotationes in Marcianum*, ed. C.E. LUTZ, Cambridge, Mass., 1939, p. 65. This particular link between the commentary of John the Scot and technical vocabulary from Boethius' *De institutione musica* is further explored by M.-E. DUCHEZ, "Jean Scot Érigène premier lecteur du *De institutione musica* de Boèce ?", in *Eriugena. Studien zu seinen Quellen*, ed. W. BEIERWALTES, Heidelberg, 1980, p. 165-187. See also M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 165-175.

²⁵ See also M. TEEUWEN, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, p. 162-189.

²⁶ Although the final volume of the edition of M. BERNHARD and C.M. BOWER has not yet appeared, I understood that they too date the oldest layer of this commentary tradition before the middle of the ninth century.

oblate in Lobbes, for short spans of time bishop of Liege and known to us primarily as bishop of Verona. On the fly-leaves he wrote *in his own hand* a sermon and a short letter, and in the margins he occasionally highlighted words from the text by repeating them in capital letters. Contrary to what one might think, these words are not key-words or index-words, so as to make it easier to use Martianus' text as a handbook. The words Rather repeats in the margins can be characterized as strange or unusual words, which he probably wanted to add to his vocabulary. Rather's style and vocabulary are (in)famous for their oddity and extravagance, just as Martianus' style and vocabulary. Rather's works show an easy familiarity with many classical authors. They are full of veiled allusions to classical authors, such as Horace, Ovid and Virgil, Catullus, Statius, and, of course, Martianus Capella. His style has been characterized as: "deliberately obscure, using convoluted word order or complicated syntax, as though writing only for the erudite, to exclude the masses", "love for unusual words: archaic words, Greek words, dialect forms, new coinages²⁷". These characteristics are not uncommon for writers especially of the tenth century, but more importantly they fit an enthusiastic interest in Martianus Capella very well.

Claudio Leonardi studied and published Rather's annotations²⁸. The manuscript *Vossianus Folio 48* shows, first of all, that Rather made annotations especially to parts of book I of *De nuptiis*, and to the books of the quadrivium. Not exclusively, for there are also annotations from his hand in, for example, book 4 (Rhetoric), but he seems to have a particular interest in the books on Astronomy (book 8) and Music (book 9). In the margins of these books we can see him harvesting words to embellish his own style: they are words unique to the Martianus Capella text, such as (from the book on Astronomy) *hiatimembris*, *cerrilulus*, *caelulum*; or they are discipline-specific vocabulary, such as *cordacistas*, *diastematicum* or *tropicamele*; or they are Latinized or non-Latinized Greek vocabulary, such as *melopœia*, *omofoni* or *plocen*. Occasionally the annotations give an alternative reading, but on the whole it can be safely concluded that Rather's interest in the text was not guided by philology or textual criticism, but by a lexicographical interest.

When Leonardi tried to trace the fruits of Rather's Martianus study in Rather's other works, the result was disappointingly meagre: he found only a handful of instances in which Rather used a word which leads us, *without doubt*, back to the Martianus text, and only one instance in which Martianus' text was clearly echoed²⁹. However slim the evidence, it is clear that Rather, who may be called a writer with a truly extravagant literary style, took an

²⁷ P.L.D. RED, *The Complete Works of Rather of Verona*, New York, 1991 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 76), p. 15.

²⁸ Rather of Verona, *Notae et glossae autographicae*, ed. C. LEONARDI, Turnhout, 1984 (in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 46A, p. 293-303); C. LEONARDI, "Raterio e Marziano Capella", *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 2 (1959), p. 73-102. See also B. LÖFSTEDT, "Bemerkungen zur Sprache des Raterius von Verona", *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 16 (1973), p. 309-315.

²⁹ C. LEONARDI, "Raterio e Marziano Capella", p. 95-96, note 6.

interest in *De nuptiis* because of the terminological and lexical richness of the work.

In this paper some examples of lexicographical interest of ninth-century and later commentators on Martianus Capella's text were shown. Martianus, whom C.S. Lewis once characterized as the oddest thing in the universe, stranger than the bee-orchid or the giraffe³⁰, must have thanked his huge popularity in the ninth-century to his lexical and stylistic extravagance, at least in part. The glosses testify to this. But at the same time this exoticness also had a limiting effect. When we *do* find echoes of Martianus, they are unmistakable³¹. But sounding like a pagan storyteller did not always produce the desired image – however learned it would make one sound. John the Scot was reprimanded for his interest in “Martianian labyrinths” rather than the teachings of the Church Fathers by bishop Prudentius of Troyes in 851³².

More subtle, and more lasting was Martianus' influence in the field of technical vocabulary of the *artes*. In the *ars musica*, the theoretical reflection on music, for example, which just started to develop in the second half of the ninth century, ancient terms were used to establish a new, theoretical framework for chant practice. The struggle with the understanding of the ancient, abstract concepts is clearly visible in the ninth-century glosses. In the process of adaptation to Carolingian chant practice many of them developed new meanings. The glosses to *De nuptiis* and other ancient or late-antique sources thus form an important source for the way in which these ancient authors shaped the technical vocabulary of ninth-century authors on the *artes liberales*, but also an important source for the tracing and understanding of their shifting meanings.

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³⁰ C.S. LEWIS, *The Allegory of Love*, New York, 1963, p. 78.

³¹ One can think, for example, of a poem on the planets attributed to Walahfrid Strabo (ed. E. DÜMLER, MGH Poetae I, Carm. 5,50): “Laudent concordēs sueto te more sorores, / Est quorum numerus bis quater atque semel, / Quae, testante mytho, volitantes alite multo / Auricomos comites intonare polis. / Usibus una meis tantum restabat in arvis, / Quam vexit cygnus tardus ad istud opus.” One could also think of the twelfth-century author Alanus of Lille and his *Anticlaudianus*.

³² Prudentius of Troyes, *De praedestinatione contra Johannem Scotum*, ed. J.P. MIGNE, PL 115, Paris, 1881, col. 1294: “Nam ille tuus Capella, exceptis aliis, vel maxime te in hunc labyrinthum induxisse creditur, cujus meditationi magis quam veritati evangelicae animum appulisti: Quin etiam cum legeres beati Augustini libros, quos *De Civitate Dei* adversus paganorum fallacissimas falsissimasque opiniones mirabili affluentia digessit, invenisti eum posuisse ac destruxisse quaedam ex libris Varronis, quibus, quoniam Capellae tuo consona videbantur, potius assentiri quam veridici Augustini allegationibus fidem adhibere delegisti.”